

REMARKS

There are now pending in this application Claims 3-9, which Claims 3 and 6 are independent. Claim 1 has been cancelled without prejudice or waiver of its subject matter. Claims 3-9 are newly added.

In view of the newly-presented claims and following remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the above application are respectfully sought.

The invention is now set forth in independent Claim 3 is directed to an image fixing apparatus with a first heater and a second heater together with first control means and second control means for controlling electric energy supplied to the first and second heaters, respectively. Each of the first and second control means effects phase control of the electric energy supply upon start of the electric energy supply. The invention is characterized in that when both of the first heater and the second heater are operated, the phase control for the second heater is started after completion of the phase control for the first heater.

New independent Claim 6 is directed to an image fixing apparatus which contains heaters and control means as recited in Claim 1 and further recites a first rotatable member and a second rotatable member for being heated by the first and second heaters, respectively. The invention of Claim 6 is characterized in that when temperatures of the first rotatable member and the second rotatable member are lower than respective target temperatures, the phase control for the second heater is started after completion of the phase control for the first heater.

Applicant respectfully submits that newly-presented independent Claims 3 and 6 are patentable over the applied art of record.

The aforementioned features of the present invention are effective to achieve suppression of the voltage drop and the commercial electric source by an inrush current to the heater when the phase control is carried out for the first and second heaters concurrently. Such features are neither taught nor suggested by the applied art of record.

Hosaka teaches an apparatus with two fixing heaters and provides that when two fixing heaters are operated, the phase control of the electric power supply to the heaters is carried out concurrently. Thus, Hosaka is not understood to teach or suggest that when both of the first and second heaters are operated, the phase control for the second heater is started after completion of the phase control for the first heater.

The claim of U.S. Patent No. 6,654,572 also fails to disclose or suggest that feature of Applicant's invention wherein when both of the first and second heaters are operated, the phase control for the second heater is started after completion of the phase control of the first heater. Thus, the invention as now recited in each of independent Claims 3 and 6 is believed patentably distinguishable from the claim of U.S. Patent No. 6,654,572.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that each of newly-presented independent Claims 3 and 6 is patentable over the applied art of record.

The remaining claims in the above-identified application are dependent claims which depend from one of Claims 3 and 6 and are therefore patentable over the art of record for reasons noted above with respect to Claims 3 and 6. In addition, each recite features of the invention still further distinguishing it from the applied art. Favorable and independent consideration thereof is respectfully sought.

Applicant respectfully submits that all outstanding matters in the above application have been addressed and that this application is in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the above application are respectfully sought.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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